

THE WOMAN-HATER.

(A COMEDY IN THREE ACTS.)

The 'Woman-hater' was written at Leipzig during the years 1746-1748, but was retouched afterwards at various times.

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

WUMSHATER.

LAURA, *his daughter.*

VALER, *his son, suitor of HILARIA.*

HILARIA, *in boy's clothes, under the name of LEMO.*

SOLBIST, *an advocate.*

LEANDER, *suitor of LAURA.*

LISETTE, *maid-servant.*

THE WOMAN-HATER.

ACT I.

SCENE I.—WUMSHÄTER, LISETTE.

WU. Where can I find the rascal? Johann! Johann!
. These confounded women! The women
have involved me in a lawsuit, and it will bring me to a
premature grave. Who knows why Herr Solbist is coming
to call on me? I am all impatience to see him. I hope we
have not received an unfavourable judgment again. Would
that I had rather been three times hanged than three times
married Johann! Don't you hear me?

LIS. (*enters*). What are your orders?

WU. What do you want? Did I call you?

LIS. Johann is gone out; what is he to do? Cannot I
do it?

WU. I do not wish to be served by you. How often have
I told you already to spare me the annoyance of seeing
you? Stay in your place, in the kitchen, and with my
daughter Johann!

LIS. You hear what I say; he is not there.

WU. Who told him, then, to go out, just when I want
him. Johann!

LIS. Johann! Johann! Johann!

WU. Now then? What are you screaming for?

LIS. He won't hear your shouting alone three streets off.

WU. Ugh! What a woman!

LIS. I like that! One spits at toads and not at human
beings.

WU. Yes, well. . . . As soon as you and the likes of you reckon yourselves among human beings, I feel inclined to quarrel with Heaven for having made me one.

LIS. Quarrel, then. Perhaps it already repents of not having made a post of you.

WU. Out of my sight!

LIS. As you order.

WU. Will you do so at once? Or must I go?

LIS. I shall have the honour of following you.

WU. I could go mad.

LIS. (*aside*). He is insane already.

WU. Has not Herr Solbist, my lawyer, been here yet?

LIS. Johann, no doubt, will tell you.

WU. Has my son gone out?

LIS. Ask your Johann.

WU. Is that an answer to my question? I want to know whether Herr Solbist has been here yet?

LIS. You do not wish to be served by me, you know.

WU. Answer, I say.

LIS. My place is in the kitchen.

WU. Stay, and answer first.

LIS. My business is only to attend to your daughter.

WU. You shall answer. Has Herr Solbist—

LIS. I will spare you the annoyance of seeing me.
(*Exit.*)

SCENE II.—WUMSHÄTER, VALER.

WU. What a creature! I will, this very day, turn the whole pack of women out of my house; even my daughter. She may look after herself. . . . Good, good, my son, that you come. I have just been asking for you.

VA. How happy I should be if I dared to think that you had wished to anticipate my request. May I flatter myself that I have at last received from you the permission I have so often sought?

WU. Oh! You are beginning about that vexatious matter again. Do not grieve your old father, who, until now, has considered you the only comfort of his old age. There is surely time enough yet.

VA. No, dearest father, there is not much time. I

have received letters to-day which oblige me to go back again as soon as possible.

WU. Well, go, then, in God's name! Only obey me in this: don't marry. I love you too much to give my consent to your unhappiness.

VA. To my unhappiness? What different ideas we must have of happiness and unhappiness! I shall consider it the greatest unhappiness which could befall me, if I have to remain any longer without a person who is the most precious in all the world to me. And you——

WU. And I shall consider it the greatest unhappiness which could befall you if I see you follow your blind impulse. To consider a woman the most precious object in the world! A woman? But the want of experience excuses you. Listen; do you regard me as a true father?

VA. I should be sorry if in this case my obedience——

WU. You are right to plead your obedience. But have you ever repented of your obedience to me?

VA. Never, hitherto; but——

WU. But you fear you will repent if you obey me in this also? Eh? But if it is the fact that I am a true father, if it is a fact that I unite prudence and experience with my fatherly affection, your fear is very unjust. People believe the unfortunate man whom storm and waves have cast on the shore, when he relates to them the terrors of the shipwreck; and he who is prudent learns from his story how little the treacherous waters are to be trusted. All that such an unfortunate man has experienced at sea, I have experienced in my three marriages. And will you not learn from my mishaps? I was just as ardent, just as thoughtless, at your age, as you are. I saw a girl with red cheeks; I saw her, and resolved to make her my wife. She was poor——

VA. Oh, father, spare me the repetition of your history. I have heard it so often——

WU. And you have not yet profited by it? . . . She was poor, and I also had little. Now picture to yourself what trouble, anxiety, and vexation a man just commencing business, as I was then, meets with, if his hands are empty to begin with.

VA. My bride, however, is anything but poor.

WU. Listen to me! In my difficulties, I could have no recourse to my relations. Why? They had proposed that I should marry a rich old widow, by which course I should have received immediate help in my business. So I offended them when I fell in love with a pretty face, and preferred to love happily than live happily.

VA. But in my marriage this can——

WU. Patience. The worst of it was that I loved her so blindly, that I went to all possible expense on her account. Her immoderate love of display brought me numberless debts.

VA. Do, father, spare me this unnecessary story, now, and tell me shortly, if I may hope——

WU. I tell it merely for your good. . . . Do you suppose that I could have extricated myself from my many debts, if Heaven had not been so benevolent as to remove the cause of my ruin after the space of a year? She died; and she had hardly closed her eyes, when mine were opened. Whichever way I looked, I was in debt. And just imagine into what a rage I fell when, after her death, I learned her cursed infidelity. My debts began to press with twofold force when I perceived that I had contracted them for love of a good-for-nothing, to please an infernal, confounded hypocrite. And are you sure, my son, that it will not also be thus with you?

VA. I can be as sure of this as I am convinced of the love of my Hilaria. Her soul is much too noble, her heart much too upright——

WU. Come, come, I don't want a panegyric on a syren, who knows how to keep her ugly scales under the water. If you were not my son, I should laugh heartily at your simplicity. In truth, you have the making of a nice husband in you! A noble soul, an upright heart, in a female body! And even, as you tell me, in a beautiful female body. But it comes, after all, to the same thing, whether they are beautiful or ugly. The beautiful woman finds lovers, and men who will steal away your honour, everywhere, and the ugly woman seeks for them everywhere. What can you answer to this?

VA. Two things. Either it is not certain that all girls

are alike false, and in this case I feel sure that my Hilaria is among the exceptions; or else it is certain that a faithful wife is only a creature of the imagination, which never has existed and never will exist; and in this case I, as well as anyone else, must——

WU. Fie, fie! For shame, for shame! But you are joking.

VA. Truly not. If a wife is an unquestionable evil, she is also a necessary evil.

WU. Yes, an evil which our folly makes necessary. But how glad would I be to have been foolish if, on that account, you could be less so! Perhaps, too, this would be possible if you would carefully consider my experiences. Listen. So when my first wife was dead, I tried my luck with a rich, and somewhat elderly——

SCENE III.—LELIO, WUMSHÄTER, VALER.

VA. Come, Lelio, come. Help me to persuade my father to stand in the way of my happiness no longer.

WU. Come, Herr Lelio, come. My son has got his marriage-attack. Help me to bring him to his senses.

LE. Oh! For shame, Valer, be open to reason. You have heard often enough from your father that marriage is a ridiculous and senseless affair. I should think you ought to be convinced by now. One may well believe a man who has tried it with three wives, that women are all all women.

VA. Is that how you take my part? Your sister will be much obliged to you.

LE. I take your part more than you think; and my sister herself would not speak otherwise were she present.

WU. Yes, I too should imagine so: for if it is true that girls do possess anything resembling reason, they must necessarily be convinced of their own detestableness. It is as clear as day; and you only cannot see it, because love keeps your eyes shut.

LE. Oh, sir, you speak like reason itself. You have quite converted me in the short time during which I have been with you. Formerly women were not altogether objects of indifference to me. But now . . . yes, I ought

to be your son, Herr Wumshäter; I would propagate the race of women-haters rarely! My sons should all be like me!

VA. I don't object to that. Such women-haters at any rate would not let the world die out.

LE. That would be silly enough. Why, wouldn't the women-haters, then, die out with the rest? No, no, Valer, we must be mindful, as far as possible, of the preservation of such excellent men. Eh?

WU. That is in some degree true. Yet I would rather see my son let others be mindful of it. I am sure that the world will not miss his contribution. Why should he for the sake of an uncertain posterity make his life miserable? And, besides, it is a very poor joy to have children if one must have as much trouble with them as I have had. You see, my son, how I am interested in your affairs. Compensate me, by your obedience, for the vexation your mother caused me.

LE. She must have been a very bad wife, eh?

WU. As they all are, dear Lelio. Haven't I told you the story of my life yet? It is a piteous thing to hear.

VA. Oh, spare him that. He has had to hear it more than ten times already.

LE. I, Valer? You are mistaken. Do tell it me, Herr Wumshäter, I beg you. I am sure I shall be able to draw many a lesson from it.

WU. I like that. Oh, my son, if you too were of the same mind! Well, listen. . . . I have had three wives.

LE. Three wives?

VA. Don't you know that yet?

LE. (*to VALER*). Oh, be quiet, do! . . . Three wives! Then you must possess a real store of varied experiences. I only wonder how you ever were able to overcome so successfully your hatred of women three times.

WU. One cannot be wise all at once by oneself. But if I had had a father such as my son has in me, a father who would have withheld me from the brink of ruin through his example. . . . Truly, my son, you do not deserve such a father—

LE. Oh, tell me, do, first of all, which of your bad wives was Valer's mother? Surely it was the best of them?

WU. The best?

LE. Of the bad, I mean.

WU. The best of the bad! . . . The worst, dear Lelio, the very worst.

LE. Well, now! So she didn't take after her son at all? Oh, the degenerate mother!

VA. Why do you want to pain me, Lelio? I love my father, but I have loved my mother too. My heart is rent when he does not leave her at peace even in her grave.

WU. My son, if you take it in that way . . . well, well. I will tell you the story afterwards, Herr Lelio, when we are alone. You cannot possibly imagine how selfish, how quarrelsome——

VA. You wish to tell it him when you are alone, so I must go.

WU. Well, well, stay here. I won't say any more. I could not have imagined that one could be so prejudiced about one's mother. Mother or not, she remains still a woman whose faults one must abominate, if one does not wish to make oneself guilty along with her. But enough. To return to your marriage. You promise me, then, not to marry?

VA. How can I promise you that? Supposing I were able to suppress the affection which now holds me in sway, yet my household affairs would oblige me to look for a helpmate.

WU. Oh, if it is only to be a helpmate in your household affairs, I know an excellent plan. Listen, take your sister with you. She is clever enough to manage your house, and I should in this way get rid of a burden which has long become intolerable to me.

VA. Am I to stand in the way of my sister's happiness?

WU. You are a wonderful fellow! What happiness can you stand in the way of? People won't excite themselves about her; and whether you take her with you or not, she will find no match that will suit either her or me. For that I should deceive an honourable, upright man with her, can never happen. I will make no man unhappy, let alone one whom I esteem. And she herself is too proud to take a worthless and bad man, to whom I would most willingly grant her.

LE. But, Herr Wumshäter, do you not consider that it would be very dangerous for me, if Valer were to take his sister with him? Hatred of women has not struck its roots any too deep as yet in my heart. Laura is lively and pretty, and, what is best of all, she is the daughter of a woman-hater, whom I have adopted as my model in all things. How easily it might happen, that I should I won't say marry, for that would be the least evil, but that I should—Heaven avert the calamity—that I should even fall in love with her. . . . Then, good-night, hatred of women! And, perhaps, after many misfortunes, I should hardly come to myself again by the time I was your age.

WU. Heaven forbid that that should arise from it! But have more confidence in yourself, Herr Lelio; you are too sensible. As has been said, my son, you may rely on this, your sister shall go with you; she must go with you. I will go at once and tell her so. (*Exit.*)

SCENE IV.—LELIO, VALER.

VA. Dearest Hilaria, what shall I do now? You see——

LE. I see that you are too impatient, Valer.

VA. Too impatient? Haven't we been here a week already? Why was not I sufficiently thoughtless to dispense with my father's consent altogether? Why must Hilaria have so much complaisance towards the weakness of his peevish age? The idea which you had of winning his good-will beforehand, in the disguise of a man under your brother's name, was the most ingenious in the world, and one which promised to lead rapidly to our end. And yet it will not help us at all.

LE. Do not say that; for I believe our affair is going on very well. Have not I, as Lelio, obtained his friendship and his entire confidence?

VA. And that, too, without performing any miracles. You agree with him in everything.

LE. Must I not do so?

VA. Yes, but not so earnestly. Instead of dissuading him from his obstinate delusion, you confirm him in it. That cannot possibly come to good. And another thing,

dearest Hilaria; you are also carrying the masquerade much too far with my sister.

LE. But it will always remain merely acting. And as soon as she learns who I am, everthing will be right again.

VA. If she does not learn it too late. I am quite aware that since you appeared here as a man you could not refrain from a little flattery. But you ought to have given this flattery as coldly as possible, without appearing to have any serious design on her heart. My father has just gone to tell her that she is to travel with us. Mind what I say, that will be grist to her mill, as the proverb says. For us, indeed, no harm can be done by that, but all the more may be for another.

LE. I know what you mean. Leander——

VA. Leander has long been on the best terms with her; and only the lawsuit in which he is involved with our father has restrained him from asking for her hand, through fear of a contemptuous refusal. But at last Herr Solbist has obligingly undertaken to set him at ease as regards this fear. He is going to be the match-maker himself; and the turn he means to give to his petition would be the silliest in the world, if he had not to do with a man whose folly will only permit itself to be opposed by folly.

LE. A polite description of your father!

VA. It is sad enough for me that I cannot think otherwise of him in this matter. My lovely Hilaria, be kind enough to alter your manner a little. Behave with more indifference towards my sister, so that Leander may not look on you as a rival who is injuring him without himself being able in the end to use the advantage he has gained over him. You must try, too, to prepossess my father in favour of the person you really are, rather than the person you appear to be. You must begin to oppose his whims, and, by means of the influence you have obtained over him, bring him at least to consider Hilaria as the single one of her sex that deserves to be exempted from his hatred. You must——

LE. You must not always be saying "you must." My dear Valer, you promise to be a tolerably domineering

husband. Do let me have the pleasure of playing out the part I have commenced according to my own judgment.

VA. If I could only see that you thought about playing it out. But you are only thinking of playing on, and are complicating the tangle more and more, and you will end by making it so complicated that it will not be possible to undo it again.

LE. Very well, if it can't be undone again, we will do as the bad playwrights do, break it.

VA. And get hissed as the bad playwrights do.

LE. Never mind.

VA. How you torture me with this indifference, Hilaria!

LE. You take it too seriously, Valer. I am not really so indifferent; and to convince you of it . . . well . . . I will this very day take a step in our plot for which I did not consider that I had sufficiently prepared the way. We will let Hilaria appear, and try what luck she will have in her true shape.

VA. You delight me. . . . Yes, dearest Hilaria, we cannot be too speedy in learning our destiny. If this does no good, we shall yet have done all that lay in our power; and I shall at last be able to persuade my conscience to confront so strange a father. I must possess you, cost what it may. How happy I shall be if I can openly boast of this hand! (*Kisses her hand.*)

SCENE V.—WUMSHÄTER, LELIO, VALER.

WU. (*who sees VALER kissing HILARIA's hand*). Eh! eh! My son, why, you are treating your bride's brother as if he were the bride herself. How you start!

LE. Dear Valer often forgets himself. . . . But do you know why that is?

WU. That I cannot know. . . . By the bye, my son, all is right. Your sister is going to travel with you. She was more pleased with my proposal than I expected. . . . But now, Herr Lelio, what is it that you were going to tell me?

LE. (*softly to VALER*). Pay attention, Valer; our plot may now be introduced.

WU. Tell me, Lelio, what did you mean?

LE. You caught the ardent Valer in an ecstasy which is a little too tender for a manly friendship. You were surprised, and thought he must be taking me for my sister. How penetrating is your intellect, Herr Wums-häter! You have hit it. He really does take me for her frequently, in the intoxication of his passion. But one must forgive him this *quid pro quo*, since it is impossible for two drops of water to be more like one another than I and my sister are. Whenever he looks me fixedly in the face, he imagines he sees her too, and cannot restrain himself from offering to me some of the respectful caresses he is wont to offer to her.

WU. How absurd!

LE. Not a few men of his stamp are much more absurd. I know a certain Lidio who behaves towards a withered nosegay which his mistress had worn in her bosom more than a year ago, as if it were his mistress herself. He talks with it for whole days, kisses it, kneels before it——

WU. And has not been sent to Bedlam yet? My son, my son, learn wisdom from the misfortunes of others, and restrain your love while you are still able to do so. Just consider, to talk with a nosegay, and kneel before it! Could the effect of a mad dog's bite be more frightful?

LE. Certainly not. But to return to my sister——

WU. Who is so like you? Now, how much is she like you, I wonder? One can probably perceive that you are of the same family.

LE. Oh, that is a trifle. Our parents themselves could not distinguish between us in our childhood, when for fun we had exchanged clothes.

VA. And now just consider, dearest father: if it is true, as you have often said yourself, that even from the outward appearance of Herr Lelio, from the form of his face, from his features, from the modest fire of his eyes, from his manner, one could infer the inner worth of his soul, his intelligence, his virtue, and all the qualities which you prize in him; consider for once, I say, whether, in the case of his amiable sister, one can draw a different inference from the very same external appearance, the

very same form of face, the very same features, the very same eyes, and the very same manner? Certainly not.

WU. Certainly yes! But that you may not force me to prove this at length, I venture to declare flatly that it is impossible that his sister can be as like him as you say.

LE. You had better prove the former for him, Herr Wumshäter, than deny the latter, for otherwise you might, perhaps this very day, be convinced of it by your eyes.

WU. How by my eyes?

LE. Has not Valer told you yet that he expects my sister to-day?

WU. What? She is coming herself? With no diminution of the high respect which I feel for you, Herr Lelio, I must however freely confess that I am not in the least desirous to make the acquaintance of your female counterpart.

VA. And just because I knew this, father, I did not want to say anything of her coming until now. But I will yet hope that I may have the pleasure of presenting her to you.

WU. Provided only you do not ask me to meet her as my future daughter-in-law.

VA. But you will meet her as the sister of Lelio?

WU. According as I find her. . . . Now, Laura, what do you want?

SCENE VI.—LAURA, LELIO, VALER.

LA. To thank you once more, dearest father, for being so kind as to allow me to go with my brother.

WU. Let that be!

LA. Your fatherly love has anticipated my wish.

WU. Well, be quiet then.

LA. In truth I was wishing to make the request myself.

WU. What is that to me?

LA. Only I did not know how I should express my wish prudently. I feared——

WU. I fear that I shall vex myself into a consumption over your chatter.

LA. I feared, I say, that you might attribute my desire to live with my brother to a false cause.

WU. Have you not finished yet?

LA. To a reprehensible weariness, perhaps, at having to remain longer with you.

WU. I shall have to stop your mouth for you.

LA. But I assure you——

WU. Now, in truth, a mad horse is easier to stop than the chatter of such a jade. You ought to know, that I have not considered you in the least in this matter. I send you with your brother, that you may manage his household affairs for him, and because I want to get rid of you. But whether it is agreeable or disagreeable to you, is all the same to me.

LA. I quite understand, father, that you are making your kindness so small and questionable only in order to spare me from a formal expression of gratitude. I will therefore be silent. But you, my dear brother——

WU. Yes, yes! She is silent; that is, she begins to chatter to somebody else.

LA. You will not, I hope, be sorry to take me with you?

VA. Dear sister——

LA. Good, good, spare your assurances. I know already that you love me. How pleased I shall be in your society, which I have had to be without for so many years!

VA. I cannot possibly expect you for my sake to exchange a beloved native town, where you have so many friends and admirers, for a place quite strange to you.

WU. But I expect it of her. I should hope you are not paying each other compliments?

LA. Do you hear? And what do you mean by your quite strange place? Shall I not have you there? Will not Lelio be there? Shall I not find his excellent sister there? (*To LELIO*) Permit me, sir——

WU. I thought so; her prating is going the whole round.

LA. Permit me, I say, to regard your sister beforehand as my friend. She need only have the half of her brother's perfections, for me to love her just as much as I esteem him.

WU. Eh? I verily believe you are bold enough to utter flatteries to respectable people. I am sorry, Herr Lelio, that this thoughtless creature should make you blush.

VA. (*whispers to LELIO*). Don't answer her too cordially.

LE. Amiable Laura——

VA. (*whispers to LELIO*). Not too cordially, I say.

LE. Most lovely Laura——

VA. (*whispers to LELIO*). Take care.

LA. Mademoiselle——

WU. (*to LAURA*). Just see how embarrassed you have made him. But it is a sign of his intelligence; for the more intelligent a man is, the less can he make out of your tittle-tattle and wish-wash. Come, Lelio, let us take a turn in the garden, and not stay here any longer with the girl. Don't you follow us, though. But you, Valer, may come with us. (*LELIO makes a bow to LAURA.*) Eh? What is that? You surely won't feel a twinge of conscience if you turn your back on her without a salutation? (*LAURA returns the bow.*) And you, girl, have done with your curtsies, or The confounded lot! When their tongues are tired, they pursue one with their grimaces.

VA. I will follow you directly.

(*Exeunt WUMSHÄTER and LELIO.*)

SCENE VII.—VALER, LAURA.

VA. Now, sister, just tell me what I am to think of you?

LA. Tell me first what I am to think of your Lelio?

VA. You are really resolved to go with me?

LA. Who would have supposed that Lelio did not know how to return a compliment! I know him better. How many pretty things he has said to me when from time to time he has found me alone! But, brother, he shall not say them to me any more alone. I will soon bring him to say them in your father's and your presence. He has done very rightly in playing a part before the latter up till now. He had to make sure of his good will. But now I should think he might gradually raise the mask a little.

VA. I am astounded.

LA. I should like to know why? Am I astounded that you have found favour in his sister's eyes?

VA. That means, I am to have the justice to refrain from astonishment that you have found favour in her brother's eyes. But Leander——

LA. Say nothing to me about Leander, I beg of you. He must have known for some time now what his position was. Haven't I sent back all his letters unopened for some days past?

VA. But only for some days.

LA. Sneering brother! Could it be disagreeable to you, then, to be allied doubly to the family of Lelio?

VA. I wager anything that you cannot explain yourself more clearly.

LA. Don't do that; for see now if you would not have lost your wager. . . . I know how I stand towards Lelio. He has confessed his love to me with more fervour, more tenderness than Leander has ever done. And don't you know, then, the way we girls have? When I go shopping I assure you I never buy the stuff which I have first bargained for. And if the shopman was to become annoyed at that, I should say, "Why don't you show me at once what I like best?"

VA. The shopman won't become annoyed at it, for he knows from experience that when you have considered much and long you always pitch at last on the worst thing; on a colour, on a pattern which has been out of fashion for an age. And you don't observe how you have deceived yourselves until you have inspected your purchase at home and at leisure. Then how much you wish for that which you had first bargained for.

LA. You can make an excellent simile. Will you not be so good as to apply it also? It contains no bad recommendation of Lelio. Oh, he shall hear how well you speak of him; he shall hear of it this very day. Good-bye, brother.

VA. A word in earnest, sister.

LA. In earnest? Have you been joking until now? Well, I will let it pass then.

VA. Listen; I tell you in plain words: Lelio cannot

possibly become yours; believe me, he cannot possibly—not possibly.

LA. Ha, ha, ha! If I don't go at once, perhaps you will tell me in confidence that he is already married. Ha, ha, ha! (*Exit.*)

VA. Silly girl! I really have not dared to say anything to her of Herr Solbist's proposal. She would anticipate him with my father, and then all would be lost. We must serve her against her will, if she is to thank us in the end. Why, here she is again.

LA. (*comes back with a serious air.*) Brother——

VA. Eh? So serious?

LA. Impossible, did you say? Explain this impossibility to me.

VA. Our father is waiting for me in the garden. I must therefore explain it very briefly. Impossible is that which is not possible. Good-bye for the present, dear sister. (*Exit.*)

LA. Is that all? I am much obliged! Patience! I must see how I can get a word with Lelio. (*Exit.*)

ACT II.

SCENE I.—LELIO or HILARIA.

LE. I shall soon believe myself that I have made love too boldly to the good Laura. Alas for our poor sex! How easily we are deceived! She signed to me confidentially just now. She wants to speak to me, I suppose. Yes, yes; I thought so. It is good that I am prepared.

SCENE II.—LAURA, LELIO.

LA. Poor Lelio, have you at last got away from my father's vexatious presence? How I wish that there was at least one person in our house whose agreeable society could indemnify you.

LE. (*aside.*) She knows excellently well how to contrive a love discourse! I hardly know how to make the preparations for my retreat equally cleverly.

LA. You do not answer me?

LE. What shall I answer?

LA. It is true. What shall one answer when the answer is placed ready on one's lips? You might just as politely have told me to my face that I at any rate was not the person alluded to.

LE. Cruel Laura!

LA. Merciful Lelio!

LE. Barbarous fair one!

LA. Anything more? Have pity, and make me more humane.

LE. You are making fun of me. Unhappy man that I am! Oh that I had never known you, or at least had known you earlier!

LA. Still no end to your ejaculations? But what do you mean by that?

LE. What have I done to you that you feed in me a flame which will consume me hopelessly?

LA. Now you are gradually coming to questions, and I hope soon to understand you.

LE. How do I deserve that you should involve me in a hopeless love?

LA. Inquire further. Perhaps something will come which I can answer.

LE. Was it, then, so important to you to make me an innocent victim of your charms? What pleasure did you promise yourself from my despair? Enjoy it, oh enjoy it. But that another shall enjoy it with you, who cannot possibly love you as tenderly as I do love you, that pierces me to the heart!

LA. By the way, you are surely not jealous?

LE. Jealous? No. One ceases to be jealous when one has lost all hope, and one can only be envious.

LA. (*aside*). What am I to think of him? May not I know who is the fortunate person whom you envy?

LE. Pray continue to dissimulate. It is just your dissimulation which has caused my unhappiness. The lovelier a girl is, the more upright she ought to be; for only by her uprightness can she obviate the mischief which her beauty would perpetrate. Immediately after

the first interchange of politeness, at any rate after the first tender glances which I directed towards you, immediately after the first sighs which my new love forced from me, you should have said to me, "I warn you, sir, be on your guard. Let not my beauty lead you too far; you come too late; my heart is already promised." You ought to have said that to me; and then I should never have presumed to covet the possession of another.

LA. (*aside*). Ha! Has my brother put anything about Leander into his head?

LE. All too happy Leander!

LA. (*aside*). Yes, yes! That is it. I will make him pay for that Sir——

LE. I pray you, no excuses, Mademoiselle. You might easily make matters worse, and I might begin to believe that you at any rate pitied me. I know the sacred rights of a first love, which I suppose yours for Leander is. I will not be guilty of any foolish attempt to weaken it. All would be in vain——

LA. I am astonished at your credulity.

LE. You are right to be astonished at it. Could I have imagined anything sillier than that your bewitching charms should have awaited my coming to disclose their power over a sensitive heart?

LA. That credulity might have been forgiven you. But do you not perceive, then, or will you not perceive——

LE. What, most lovely Laura?

LA. That it is another credulity for which I am displeased with you.

LE. Another? You are right Fool that I am.

LA. What now?

LE. I can hardly raise my eyes for shame.

LA. For shame?

LE. How ridiculous I must appear to you!

LA. I did not know——

LE. How absurd I appear to myself!

LA. You appear? And why, then?

LE. Certainly, how ridiculous, how absurd, that I should have taken politeness for tenderness, the conventional obligations for tokens of growing love! That, that is the credulity which displeases you so much in me.—a

credulity which is all the more culpable the more pride it presupposes.

LA. Lelio!

LE. But forgive me; be generous, lovely Laura; judge me not with too much severity. My youth deserves your forbearance. What man of my years, of my education, of my ardent disposition, is not a bit of a coxcomb? It is our nature. Every smiling glance seems to us the reward of our desert, or the homage due to our worth, without our inquiring whether it has not fallen on us through mere absence of mind, out of pity, or even out of contempt.

LA. Oh, you make me impatient; I have no idea how it may fare at times with your small brains.

LE. Not always for the best. But trouble yourself about me no more. You have brought me back within the bounds of my own insignificance.

LA. More still? I see my father coming, I must be brief. That you should so easily have accepted as true a silly story about a certain Leander that,—that is the credulity which annoys me in you. . . . I leave you; follow me without being noticed to the summer-house. You shall have proofs that some one is trying to deceive you. (*Exit.*)

SCENE III.—WUMSHÄTER, VALER, LELIO.

LE. I shall not follow you, my good child. I really do not know when anything has been so unpleasant to me as this interview.

WU. Why, Herr Lelio, you have slipped away from me. You can hardly think how angry my son is making me. See, through your confounded request, I have quite forgotten that Herr Solbist was coming to see me. I hope he has not been here already. My servants tell me nothing at all. Why is it? Heaven has chastised me with a lot of women to wait on me, and if once in a while I get a decent man to serve me, a month is scarcely out when that confounded hussy, Lisette, has him in her toils. Well, well, when once my daughter is gone, I won't endure even a female fly under my roof any more.

VA. Look, father, here is Herr Solbist just coming.

SCENE IV.—SOLBIST (*in a large wig, with a packet of legal documents under his arm*), WUMSHÄTER, VALER, LELIO.

WU. Ah! Is that you, my dear Herr Solbist?

SOL. Yes, it is certainly.

VA. (*aside to LELIO*). Don't let him see that you know anything of his plot, for everything must be kept secret from him.

WU. Well, what good news do you bring with you?

SOL. Hadn't I better have told you at once before the front door? . . . Patience. I must speak with you in complete privacy.

WU. In complete privacy? You make me uneasy.

SOL. (*to LELIO, who is surveying him from head to foot*). Well? What are you staring at me for?

LE. I admire you.

SOL. As a bumpkin does a large house, when, for once, he comes to town.

LE. I see, you have got yourself up more than usual to-day.

SOL. I am a rogue if it was on your account.

LE. In this wig you might get yourself engraved for the Illustrated News.

SOL. Don't vex me to-day. To-day I am on professional business. Another time you can have your fun with me. To-day be so good as to respect my office.

LE. I have all respect for your official documents.

SOL. You might have dispensed with that piece of mockery. Is it my fault that I have to carry them myself? No, certainly not. I have now long enough served the ungrateful town and the dear village people as an industrious counsellor; and my deserts ought by rights to yield already at least sufficient for me to be able to keep a boy, a writer, a secretary, or something of the sort. But who, then, can compel fortune? Until now I have had to be everything myself. But as soon as I can keep a boy, or something of that sort, my generosity will not hesitate to propose you.

LE. You are joking, Herr Solbist, and with acuteness.

SOL. I never joke otherwise. But, Herr Wumshäter, please, please get these young people away. I must speak with you alone.

LE. You need only talk with him in legal style, and it will be just as good as if we were not here.

WU. But they are my friends, you know; what you have to say to me you can certainly say in their presence.

SOL. So you don't wish to listen to me? Good (*is going*).

LE. We will not expose you to his caprice, Herr Wumshäter. Pray remain, Herr Solbist, we are going. (*Whispers to VALER.*) Come, Valer, apart from that it will soon be time for me to change my costume.

WU. But pray don't take it ill. (*Exeunt VALER and LELIO.*)

SCENE V.—WUMSHÄTER, SOLBIST.

WU. And now, Herr Solbist, let me hear what secrets you have to confide to me?

SOL. Are they gone? Step this way. They might be listening at the door.

WU. Well?

SOL. Herr Leander——

WU. Has the devil taken him?

SOL. Hush! Just listen. Herr Leander wishes (*speaking in his ear*) wishes to come to a settlement with you.

WU. (*very loud*). What? He wishes to come to a settlement with me?

SOL. Hush! hush! Yes, he does. He has let me make a fool of him.

WU. (*very loud*). You are a fool yourself. I do not want to come to a settlement with him. How many hundred times haven't I most decidedly assured you of that?

SOL. Hush, hush, hush! With your confounded shouting you will ruin me in honour, reputation, credit, and everything. Supposing, now, some one has heard you?

WU. Oh, I will give you evidence before all the world that you are seeking nothing but my ruin. Come to a settlement! Have not I the best of cases?

SOL. But even the best of cases may be lost, when it stands as yours does. Your late wife let matters go too far.

WU. The confounded woman! Doesn't all my unhappiness come from women?

SOL. Not only your unhappiness, but all the unhappiness in the world, as I shall presently show. Make haste, and listen to the proof, and tell me briefly whether it would not please you if Leander I won't say were to come to a settlement with you, since you won't hear anything of settlements but, on a trifling, quite trifling, condition, were to let the suit drop.

WU. Let it drop? As if I had won it! Yes, that would be something. But what, then, is the condition?

SOL. A condition that will be altogether after your own heart.

WU. Well?

SOL. Briefly, Leander will let the suit drop on condition on condition, Herr Wumshäter (*speaking in his ear*) that you will render him unhappy.

WU. (*very loudly*). What? Render him unhappy?

SOL. You will render me so with that treacherous, auctioneer's voice of yours. I like to manage all my affairs secretly and in silence. But you, you I'll wager Leander has heard it in his own house!

WU. Well, then, reveal to me in all secrecy in what way I can make him unhappy.

SOL. Nothing is easier. Listen now, in confidence. The man has become perfectly silly. I believe Heaven has punished him on your account. He has fallen on a most desperate idea. I will explain it to you at once.

WU. I don't see yet what you are aiming at.

SOL. (*puts his documents down, takes from his pocket a large frill, which he puts on, draws on a pair of white gloves, steps back a few paces, and begins his harangue in a pedantic manner*). Most nobly born, especially to be venerated Sir and Patron! When God had made Adam, and had placed him in a beautiful Paradise. In passing, I will remind you that up till now, no one knows exactly where Paradise was situated. Scholars contest the point very hotly. But no matter where it was. When God then had placed Adam in this, to us unknown, Paradise

WU. Ay! Herr Solbist, Herr Solbist!

SOL. Just step a little in front of the door, that no one may come in.

WU. I shall thank God if anyone does come, for I really am afraid you have gone out of your mind.

SOL. Do just go, and have patience a moment. When, then, I say, Adam was placed in this Paradise,—when he, I say, was placed in it; and, I will remark, was therefore in the Paradise in which he had been placed by God. He was therefore in this Paradise. Eh? This is odd! If I could only find my way out again. There it is now! That is what occurs when you interrupt an orator.

WU. I am only sorry that I shall soon have to put pressure on you. Tell me, for goodness' sake, what you mean?

SOL. I would rather you had given me a box on the ear, than that you had broken the thread of my discourse. I must just see whether I can get hold of it again. (*Very quickly.*) Most nobly born, specially to be venerated Sir and Patron; when God had made Adam, and placed him in a beautiful Paradise. Most nobly born, specially to be venerated Sir and Patron; when God had made Adam and placed him in a beautiful Paradise. No, I really can't get further, it is as if the thread had been cut away from my lips. Well, be it so; the greatest loss is yours.

WU. Mine?

SOL. Yes, indeed. You would have heard a truly Ciceronian masterpiece. A practised club of orators could not have composed it better. Now you will have to be satisfied with the *contenta*. Listen, then: my oration. for you must at least have perceived that I desired to make an oration. My oration, I say, had three *partes*, albeit formerly there were wont to be eight *partes orationis*. The first part, or rather the first *pars*, contained a correct list of all bad wives, from Eve downwards to the three you had.

WU. What? A list of all bad wives? Ah! I should have been curious to hear that. It could, however, hardly have been a list of all bad wives, but only of the worst. For a list of all bad wives would be a list of all the wives that have ever lived in the world, and that it could not have been.

SOL. Quite so. My next *pars*

WU. Had you the wife of Job in your list?

SOL. Certainly. My next *pars*

WU. Had you also Tobias' wife?

SOL. Certainly. My next *pars*

WU. And Queen Jezebel, too?

SOL. Also. My next *pars*

WU. Also the Scarlet Woman of Babylon?

SOL. Her, too. My next *pars*

WU. You perceive that I also know a thing or two.

SOL. I perceive that you only know the best of them. I know quite different ones. A Hispulla, a Hippia, a Medullina, a Saufeia, an Ogulina, a Messalina, a Cæsonia of all of whom more may be read in the sixth book of the History of Juvenal. Well, lest my *contenta* should be longer than my oration would have been, just listen to me further. My second *pars* proved as briefly as thoroughly that a wife is the greatest misfortune in the world, and deduced therefrom incontestably that marriage must be a very senseless affair, a proposition which was supported at great length by *testimonia*, especially yours.

WU. Ah! My dear Herr Solbist, how did you come upon such an excellent subject? I am really heartily sorry now, that your oration came to nothing. Ay, ay! But how is it that you desired to give me so much pleasure? It is neither my birthday to-day, nor my name-day, that I should expect you to make me so fine a speech of congratulation.

SOL. All will become clear to you through my third *pars*. The third *pars* contained, finally, a statement that, notwithstanding this folly, namely, the folly of marrying, ... just guess who wishes to commit—

WU. Who? Surely not my son? For I think I have pretty well talked it out of him.

SOL. No, not your son.

WU. Well, I would, then, that it were my worst enemy.

SOL. Bravo!

WU. I wish it were Leander.

SOL. You have hit it.

WU. Really? How unlucky that I can't raise one of my three wives from the dead, and give her to him!

SOL. You can do that, Herr Wumshäter; you can do that, if only you desire it. Does not your second wife live and move in the person of your daughter? In short, you see in me the wooer for Herr Leander, and my mission, indeed, concerns the honourable and virtuous maid, Miss Laura, lawful and only daughter of the body of Herr Zacharias Maria Wumshäter. If he is fortunate in his suit, you will have won your case. *Dixi.*

WU. What? my dearest Herr Solbist, is it possible? Leander wishes to have my daughter, and if I give her to him, shall I have won my case?

SOL. You will have won it! Don't hesitate.

WU. Hesitate?

SOL. You must be convinced that one cannot devise a procedure more hostile to a man than to give him a wife.

WU. I am convinced of that. He shall have her, yes; I will give her to him with joy. How miserable she shall make his life. Leander, Leander, you shall feel the vexation tenfold which you have caused to me. How delighted I shall be when I hear in a short time that my daughter is quarrelling daily with him; that she won't let him enjoy a morsel in peace; that she even lays hands on him; that she is unfaithful to him; that she is spending all his fortune; finally, that he has to give up house and home through her! I think, I think, she will bring it to that. Yes, yes, Herr Solbist, Leander shall have my daughter, he shall have her. But if I am to win the case in this way, I must have the six thousand thalers, which were deposited, paid to me.

SOL. You can have them to-morrow.

WU. To-morrow? That would be excellent. I have just now a chance of investing them at six per cent. But I hope Leander does not fancy that he will get them back in the form of a dowry? He may just give up that idea. I can give him nothing with my daughter, nothing at all.

SOL. It will not be necessary, either; Leander is rich enough himself.

WU. If that is the case, she is his wife this very day if he pleases. I intended her, indeed, to go with my son; but that will come to nothing now. It is better that she

should avenge me on a man who has wronged me so much. We will go to her at once; Herr Leander may come afterwards himself. Come, Herr Solbist—

SOL. Pray go. I must first take off my lace frill, and put my kid gloves away. But don't you tell anyone that I have been match-maker. (*Exit WUMSHÄTER.*) It might not be perfectly in keeping with my office, for which reason I very wisely didn't choose to come in complete costume. How easily people might have fancied that I wanted to get a wooer's reward. Quick, there's someone coming.

SCENE VI.—LISETTE, SOLBIST.

SOL. (*still taking off his frill*). Is it you, Lisette? Well, well, you may know now what I have been doing here.

LIS. Has all gone well, Herr Solbist?

SOL. As if everything which I once undertake must not of necessity go well. If people had taken me into their counsels sooner, Laura might even now be the mother of Leander's children.

LIS. One would hardly think what knaveries there are in that little grey head!

SOL. Don't make me blush. Certainly Herr Wumshäter would have refused Leander, if the proposal had been made for him in any other way. But it was not so very difficult to discover this one way, especially for a man of experience like me. For, in confidence, Lisette, (*whispers*) do you suppose that this is the first couple that I have brought together?

LIS. Oh dear, no. I believe on the contrary that you are an adept at match-making.

SOL. Hush, hush! Don't shout so! It has had to bring me in many a bright thaler. People are frightfully mistaken if they suppose I am the author of nothing but quarrels. As an honourable lawyer, of course, I must be able to make those; yet if that does not thrive well at all times, I can also make marriages.

LIS. As if making marriages and making quarrels was not the same thing! And from what I have heard, you can part married folk again, just as easily as you can bring them together. You are a sly fox. Could you have

earned so much through divorce cases if you had not laid the foundation for them by your match-making?

SOL. The deuce! Who told you that? I do everything quietly and in silence, and don't ever like speaking openly about such matters, and yet you have heard it. That cannot have happened by fair means. . . . But it is true that it is a pleasure when I give my clients audience in the forenoon. Every one has recourse to me. If the peasant wants to bring an action against his master, he comes to me. If an aged little matron wishes to get a young healthy husband, she comes to me. If one scamp wants to bring an action for libel against another, he comes to me. If a young wife wants to get rid of her decrepit old husband, she comes to me. But all these affairs, all these, particularly those which concern marriage, go on in such secrecy that they must only speak of them to me in my ear. And yet you know of it? Hold your tongue, Lisette, my dear, and don't tell anyone else. Perhaps I can also do you a service. I don't know, though, whether you want to be married already. But the desire comes very quickly sometimes. Just let me know when it does. I keep a correct list of all the marriageable maidens and bachelors in the town. I read it over once or twice every day, and see who is likely to have need of my help. To tell the truth, I have already marked a few young fellows with an asterisk, who would suit you very well.

LIS. If they are rich, young, and handsome, you can be sure that they will suit me. My future husband has no need of any more good qualities than these. I have the others.

SOL. I will show you my list. You can then look out which of those in it pleases you best. I have described them in detail according to their external and internal gifts, and have drawn certain tolerably good conclusions from the proportions of their limbs; especially of the nose, shoulders, calves. . . . More of this at another time, Lisette, my dear. I must go and send Herr Leander here. Notwithstanding the lawsuit, he has always had much love for Miss Laura.

LIS. Oh, and so has she for him. Don't forget the list.

SOL. But be sure to keep silence! Keep silence.

LIS. (*alone*). There is an upright lawyer for you! If only his plot is not too late. Laura has seemed to me much changed towards Leander during the last few days. I fear that Valer has brought his future brother-in-law with him at an unlucky time.

SCENE VII.—WUMSHÄTER, LISETTE.

WU. Where is the daughter, Lisette?

LIS. What daughter?

WU. The daughter. I have looked for her already all over the house. Where is she?

LIS. What daughter, I say?

WU. The hussy only wants me to say "my daughter;" because she knows how I dislike saying it.

LIS. Oh, so it is your own daughter you are asking for? Your own? I really don't know where she is. But what shall we bet that I know what you wish to announce to her?

WU. Perhaps she is in the garden?

LIS. That may be. You have certainly acted most wisely, in allowing Herr Leander——

WU. Don't you say I have acted wisely, or I shall think that I have committed the greatest of follies.

LIS. Well, then, I will say the latter.

WU. Say it, then, in the name of all the witches, and leave me in peace.

LIS. (*alone*). Now, certainly, if I were ever to get such a fool as that for my husband, I think I should be in my old age as great a man-hater as he is a woman-hater. But, be it observed, not before I am old.

ACT III.

SCENE I.—LISETTE *from one side*, and LAURA *from the other*.

LIS. So excited, Mamselle?

LA. Where is the worthless lawyer? The officious old match-maker! What is he meddling in? Who commis-

sioned him to ask me from my father as an affliction for a man with whom I should be most afflicted?

LIS. By whom you would be most afflicted? Do you not love Leander? And have you not long since granted him your permission to seek your father's consent in one way or another?

LA. It is lucky for you that you say "long since." For this very reason that once, long since, I loved Leander, and once, long since, desired to be his, people might as well have inquired beforehand whether I still desire it, and whether I still love him. Must one go to work so confidently, without telling me a word about it? I should think I am not the least important person in the matter.

LIS. And so you really do not love Leander any longer?

LA. No; and I am ashamed of ever having loved him. Had it not been for your misleading me, I should never have honoured with my respect a man who lives in such open disagreement and strife with my father.

LIS. (*makes a low courtesy*). You confer too much honour on me, in confounding me and your own heart.

LA. My heart cannot have taken much part in that matter. A passing fancy; that is what it was at the utmost. Otherwise it would doubtless have been more painful to me to forget him. A single trifling consideration has drawn me away from this unseemly love.

LIS. Oh! A consideration? May not one know the nature of this consideration? Surely not the consideration of Herr Lelio?

LA. You are a fool.

LIS. I expected that answer. But do you know the proverb about children and fools?

LA. Leander is my father's enemy. It is true he has often assured me that he is not so, and that he is unable to perceive the necessity of one man hating another because he is engaged in a lawsuit with him; one may prosecute one's right, you know, even against a man whom one esteems and loves. But I see clearly now that this is the speech of a cunning fellow, who desires to put himself in such a position that he may not lose his case even when he loses it; a selfish man, who tries to win back by a

marriage-contract what he has lost through a verdict. There is my consideration! Whether Lelio has given me an opportunity of arriving at this consideration or whether he has merely strengthened it does not concern you at all, and is solely and entirely my business.

LIS. I have learnt by experience that whenever we girls defend our conduct with reasoning and by alleging ground for it, we are always wrong. So confess, therefore, to me that Lelio is the sole cause of your change of feeling. His society alone during the last few days has so captivated you, that you will neither read Leander's letters, nor grant him a secret meeting. How willingly you used to do both!

LA. I do not wish to be reminded by you of faults which, as I said before, I should not have committed but for you. I regret sufficiently that I was so weak.

LIS. To be weaker still and to give yourself up to a fickle youth whom you have only known for a week, and whose love you infer from a few meaningless flatteries. I advise you to be careful, Miss.

SCENE II.—WUMSHÄTER, LISETTE, LAURA.

WU. Well? Have you scratched poor Herr Solbist's eyes out?

LIS. If he had not already gone, who knows what she would have done?

WU. Oh I fully believe, that, like a good daughter, she wishes all ill-luck to the man who has set her honest father free from two troubles at once, from a woman and a lawsuit. But whether you grudge me this good fortune or not, I don't intend to give it up. You must become Leander's wife or cease to be my daughter.

LA. That is a hard alternative! Nevertheless I shall take the liberty of telling you that I prefer your first order, and will go with my brother. I cannot change my mind as quickly as you change yours. Perhaps, though, some one has been trying to convince you that I love Leander.

WU. That has not been considered at all; all the better if you don't love him. Woman's love is, in truth,

mere folly, and, with your sex, to love only means to hate less. You are unable to love anyone but yourselves.

LIS. (*breaks out at him*). No, sir, no! That is too bad! Your daughter, I agree, is wrong not to accept the husband you offer her, but you must not slander the whole sex on that account.

WU. Whew! Now it's time I was off. I had sooner get between mill-wheels, than between two women. Silence, pray, silence! My daughter can answer well enough for herself.

SCENE III.—VALER, WUMSHÄTER, LISETTE, LAURA.

VA. Father, Lelio's sister has just come. She is staying with a relative who lives here, and has already sent to me. I am expecting her every minute. I hope you are still willing to allow me to present her to you.

WU. I should like to see her once, were it only for the sake of the asserted resemblance. But not more than once. Bring her. I will tell her myself, as gently as possible, that she is not to count on you.

LA. What, brother? Your Hilaria is here, and you did not prepare me for her coming by a single word?

VA. You will not take it ill, sister. I did not want to tell you anything before it was certain. . . . You will have far more to wonder at than her mere arrival, however; her marvellous likeness to her brother. . . . What do I see? Heavens! Here she is herself.

SCENE IV.—LELIO (*in her true character as HILARIA*),
VALER, WUMSHÄTER, LISETTE, LAURA.

VA. Oh! most lovely Hilaria, how joyful, how happy you make me! How am I to thank you enough for deigning to visit a family which is already proud in anticipation of a nearer connection with you?

LE. Permit me, Valer, to leave your flattery unanswered for the present, and first of all to show my respect for one (*to WUMSHÄTER*) who is so kind as to allow me to love him as a father.

WU. I am plea . . . very displea . . . not alto-

gether displeased, Mademoiselle, to make your acquaintance; but I must tell you at the very commencement, that you are going a little too fast. I am already called father by two——

VA. (*to LELIO*). And his only wish is to be acknowledged as such by you also——

WU. No, my son, no.

VA. (*leading HILARIA to LAURA*). Permit, permit a sister, Hilaria, who can no longer restrain her joy to embrace you.

LE. (*embracing her*). I take the liberty, lovely Laura, to ask for your friendship?

LA. I am ashamed of having allowed you to anticipate me in this request.

VA. Well, father, are you not astounded at the likeness of Hilaria to her brother?

LA. Certainly, one cannot but be astounded. I cannot look at him enough. Where is Herr Lelio? Why cannot we have the pleasure of comparing him with this counterpart?

WU. If only Lelio were here; if only he were here! I don't know where your eyes can be, good people. I won't go so far as to say that you have no resemblance at all to your brother, Mademoiselle, but one really has to look closely to perceive the likeness. In the first place, Lelio is at least a hand-breadth taller, in spite of the high heels of your shoes.

LE. And yet we have measured ourselves together a hundred times, and have not been able to discover the smallest difference.

WU. My eye does not deceive me; I can trust it. For another thing, Herr Lelio is not quite so stout; he is slenderer and better formed, though he wears no stays. I do not mean to offend you in this, Mademoiselle, but merely to do justice to your brother.

LA. I cannot agree with you, father. It is indeed true that one could hardly find a finer figure in any man than in Herr Lelio; but look carefully. Hilaria has exactly the same figure, only that, owing to the tightness of her dress, she appears rather to be slimmer than stouter.

WU. And the face——

VA. Well? The face?

WU. I won't mention it. Lelio has a fresh natural colour, but on your face, Mademoiselle, why, the rouge lies inches deep.

LE. Though I don't think that it is unallowable for a girl to rouge a little, still I have never yet thought proper to come to the assistance of my countenance in this way. I don't wish to say this to praise myself; for perhaps what others do from pride, I have left undone from greater pride.

WU. I understand, I understand The eyes, my son. Have you not noticed yet that these are grey eyes, while Lelio's are black?

VA. What do you say? These eyes grey?

WU. Certainly, grey eyes, and, besides, they are just as languid as Lelio's are fiery.

LA. Oh, father!—

WU. Oh, daughter! Hold your tongue. I know quite well that hawks don't pick out hawks' een. You, of course, want her one day to call your yellow eyes black. Are you going to make me blind? And this nose Lelio hasn't a little stumpy, hooked nose like this. Will you deny that, too?

VA. I am astonished!

WU. You must be astonished at your own delusion. The mouth, too, is twice as big as Lelio's. What a prominent lip! What a pointed chin! The right shoulder is a hand-breadth higher than the left! In a word, my son, the asserted resemblance was a trick to coax your father into giving his consent. And, in truth, it would have been a great point against me, if it had really been as you said. So much the better that it is not so, and that it is more probable now that in a body which differs so greatly from that of the brother, there will also dwell a totally different soul. Your brother, Mademoiselle, is an intelligent young man, who knows and approves of the reasons which make it impossible for me to assent to my son's marrying. He will therefore quite excuse me for treating you with so little ceremony. I cannot stay any longer now, but must give my attention to set ling matters—the sooner the better—with Leander. You, Laura,

prepare yourself. I can't let her go with you now, Valer; I can win my lawsuit here by her, and that is of most importance.

LA. Do not allow yourself to be deluded, brother; I certainly shall go with you. Your lawsuit is lost, if you are to win it through me.

WU. Keep your contradictions for your husband. (*Exit.*)

SCENE V.—LELIO, VALER, LAURA, LISETTE.

LA. We must feel ashamed, brother, that so amiable a guest has been so badly received by our father. You must be very sure of your Hilaria's love, to have dared to put her patience to this painful test.

LE. You have a very kind sister, Valer; her politeness would embarrass me, did I not know in what estimation my brother has the good fortune to stand with her. You like him, sweet Laura, and this conquest was the first thing which he told me of, with an air of triumph, on my arrival. He is indeed worthy that a girl should sigh for him. But, all the same, take care; he is a little traitor, and doesn't make the least scruple of being inconstant. If you don't know how to keep a firm hold of him, he will be out of the net before you expect it. Besides, he is boastful, and I won't be certain that he will not boast of more favours than he has really received I take my leave of you for the present. Come, Valer.

SCENE VI.—LAURA, LISETTE.

LA. What is that? I think Lelio and Hilaria must be mad. How does he know that I love him? And, even if he could be sure of it, is it not a very unworthy trick to make a confidante of such an impertinent sister? Very well, my young friend, it is lucky that we have not yet gone very far! But what are you standing there like that for, Lisette? Are you petrified? Speak, do!

LIS. I cannot yet quite make out what I have seen and heard. Give me a little time to recover from my astonishment. Who was the girl?

LA. Hilaria; you were looking at her hard enough the

whole time. Wasn't she sufficiently like Lelio, that you should still doubt it?

LIS. She was only too like him; so like, so exactly like, that I can't help wondering why you yourself have not had a suspicion——

LA. A suspicion of what?

LIS. A suspicion which I will not be persuaded out of. Hilaria must be Lelio, or Lelio must be Hilaria.

LA. How do you mean?

LIS. You will do well to be on your guard, Miss. I will soon fathom this secret. But, until then, think of the dog with the piece of meat. You have a lover, of whom you are sure: don't turn round to the shadow of another.

LA. Be quiet with your childish stories. Be Lelio what he may, he has lost me. He shall see; he shall see, that one can forget a bit of a face like his more easily than another.

LIS. Quite so. Especially when there are realities with the other, which certainly are wanting with him. For the more I think of it, the more probable it appears to me Hush! Here comes the other face itself! Show now that a little dandy like Lelio hasn't got much hold on us.

SCENE VII.—WUMSHÄTER, LEANDER, LAURA, LISETTE.

WU. Here, daughter, I bring you the husband to whom I resign all my rights in you. It is Herr Leander.

LEA. I flatter myself, Mademoiselle, that you will not regard me as a complete stranger.

LA. I could not have believed that the few occasions on which we have had the opportunity of meeting in public places, could have made a man of Herr Leander's refined perception so confident of success. You have applied to my father in a matter about which you unquestionably ought first to have come to an agreement with me.

WU. Eh? Just fancy! So he ought to have made his application to you before, ought he?

LIS. (*aside*). As if he had not done so! Very well! We must dissemble a little.

WU. I think you are very impertinent, and if I did not

wish to spare you in the presence of your bridegroom, I would give you a very severe reprimand.

LEA. It is true, lovely Laura, that my love has been much too impatient, and that you have a right to complain of me.

WU. You surely are not going to apologize?

LA. And the way, Herr Leander, in which Solbist wooed for me——

WU. There was nothing objectionable in his way. And, in short, I wish you to obey me. Can I not demand that, my son?

SCENE VIII.—VALER, WUMSHÄTER, LEANDER, LAURA,
LISETTE.

VA. If I have rightly guessed what you were speaking of, I will almost pledge myself for my sister's obedience.

LA. You are very bold, brother. I could much sooner pledge myself for your disobedience; and make a safe bet that you were more likely to give me a sister-in-law, than I to give you a brother-in-law.

LEA. Is it possible, Mademoiselle?

VA. Do not be uneasy about that.

LEA. But I hear——

VA. You hear the pruderies of a bride——

WU. And I hear a woman's nonsense! Hold your tongue, hussy! Your brother has far too much sense to be still thinking of marriage.

VA. Excuse me, father. Since I must now forego the promised help of my sister, it is so much the more necessary to abide by the determination I came to before. I certainly hope too that you will no longer be opposed to it. The whole town knows you to be a just man. But what would people say if it came out that you had highly esteemed the very same qualities and perfections in one person, which in another you depreciated? What would people say if they learnt that deep-rooted rancour against a whole sex, by whom you believe yourself to be injured, should have prevented you from recognising that which the whole world recognises? Such an obvious resemblance——

WU. Hold your tongue about your chimerical resemblance! Or will you force me to make you ridiculous in Herr Leander's eyes too? Indeed, I shall have to do it.

Herr Leander, you shall be arbitrator between us. Go, bring your Hilaria here, but bring her brother as well. We will make a fair comparison.

VA. I agree, father. Lisette, run quickly to Herr Lelio's room. You will find them together. Request them to come here. (*Exit LISETTE.*)

WU. You will see, Herr Leander, that I am right.

LEA. (*whispers to VALER*). May your trick succeed as well as mine has.

VA. (*whispers to LEANDER*). I hope so, my dearest friend, and I thank you.

WU. (*seeing LEANDER and VALER talking together*). No, that is not fair; you mustn't talk it over together beforehand. I hope, Herr Leander, that the first test of your uprightness, which I demand from you—

LEA. Fear nothing. I shall not depart from the truth if the matter should depend on my decision. But I hope it will not do so.

WU. How so? Do you know already what our dispute is about? The sister is said to be exactly like the brother, and because I like the brother he requires me to like the sister also.

VA. Have I not a right to require it?

WU. Granted the likeness, you could require it with some right. But that likeness is the very point in dispute.

VA. We shall not dispute about it much longer, and I am convinced that you will at last have to acknowledge it.

WU. I certainly shall not acknowledge it. But if I do, it will be a sure proof that I have lost sense and reason, and that therefore you are not bound to obey me in the least.

VA. Mark that, Herr Leander; that I am not bound to obey him in the least, in case he has to admit the likeness himself.

WU. Ay, mark it! Eh? What masquerading is this?

SCENE IX.—LELIO or HILARIA, LISETTE, WUMSHÄTER, VALER, LAURA, LEANDER.

LE. (*attired partly as a man, partly as a woman, the dress arranged according to the taste of the actress*). You requested, sir, to see Lelio and Hilaria both at once.

WU. Eh? My mind misgives me.

LE. Here they both are.

WU. What?

LIS. Yes, sir, here they both are, and you were caught.

WU. What? I caught?

LIS. (*whispers to LAURA*). Wasn't I right, Miss? You start?

WU. I caught? How am I to understand that?

LE. You will have the goodness to understand it thus: that the same person cannot be a hand-breadth taller than she really is.

WU. Well?

LE. That the very same eyes cannot be both grey and black.

WU. Well?

LE. That the very same nose——

VA. In short, dearest father (*throwing himself at his feet*), forgive my innocent trick. Lelio is Hilaria, and Hilaria only had the kindness to follow me hither in man's clothes that she might have the opportunity of gaining the goodwill of a man whose inexorable feeling against her sex she well knew.

WU. Get up, my son, get up, and let us have an end of this nonsense. I see clearly how it is. Your Hilaria is not here at all, and that frivolous Lelio, with his girl's face, has played her part. Fie, Lelio! (*advancing towards her*). No, no! One doesn't deceive me so easily. Take off that second dress, my good (*is going to slap her on the shoulder*). Heavens! What do I see? Alas, my poor eyes! what has come to them? It is a woman! It really is a woman! And probably the most deceitful, artful, and dangerous one in the whole world. I have been deceived! I have been betrayed! My son, my son, how could you do this?

VA. Let me once more ask for pardon at your feet.

WU. What is the good of my pardon to you, if you will no longer follow my advice? Of course I forgive you, but——

LE. I too pray most humbly for forgiveness——

WU. Go, do; go, do; I forgive you too . . . since I must.

VA. Not because you must, father. Don't let us hear such painful words. Forgive us because you love us.

WU. Well, then, yes, because I love *you*.

LE. And will soon love me, as I sincerely hope.

WU. You hope too much. Not to hate you will be all that I can do. I see clearly a man must fall in love, and must be foolish. What can I do against fate? Be you so too, my son. Be foolish! Through our folly we most surely become wise. Go in peace! I am glad at least that I need not be an eye-witness of your folly. See only that my daughter no longer opposes me——

LA. Do not fear, father. I will not cause a second vexation. I give Herr Leander my hand, and would have given it to him even if Lelio had not been Hilaria. (*To HILARIA.*) This is for you, for your triumphant air?

LE. Are you angry with me, dearest Laura? (*To LEANDER.*) However did you set about it, sir, that you were able to move such a stony heart to love? If you knew what assaults I made on it in my disguise, and how sturdily it nevertheless——

LA. Stop, Hilaria, or I shall really be angry. (*To LEANDER, who is about to answer HILARIA.*) Don't answer her, Leander; I promise you that you shall never have a more dangerous rival than Lelio was.

LEA. How happy am I!

VA. And how happy I am too!

WU. In a year or so I hope you will exclaim differently!

LIS. Differently certainly, especially if more voices join in. (*To the audience.*) Laugh, gentlemen, pray; this comedy ends like a marriage-song.